

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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A STERN CHASE.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS.

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THE FIRST PART.

CHAPTER VIII. HUGH ROSSLYN'S PROJECT.

BEFORE the hour at which, as he calculated, Ines would be going to the convent of Las Anonciades, Hugh Rosslyn had carefully reconnoitred that building and its surroundings. The lofty white walls that enclosed it, with its courtyard and garden, were unbroken, save by the great gate already described, on three sides of the extensive square which it formed. The street was a wide one, and the houses opposite bore the prison-like aspect of all houses in tropical countries which have no external balconies, but turn as blank an aspect as possible to the sunshine. They were long and low, with dark doors and mere slits for windows on the outer side, and the street had a more or less forsaken look always. It was not in a fashionable or in a busy commercial quarter, and Hugh thought it looked like a street in which a gentleman might venture to accost a lady, without fearing that a battery of observant eyes was turned on the transaction. The quadrangular space occupied by the convent was divided, at both ends, from the adjacent buildings by a passage, paved in a manner so excruciating as to be almost prohibitory, and at the back of the wall that enclosed the fourth side of the square, there was an unpaved space, extending the whole length of it. A small postern-gate, used for the gardener's purposes, broke the monotony of this wall, over which the branches of some palmettoes extended, making a slight but grateful shade. Upon this quiet strip of earth

Hugh looked approvingly. If he could but secure a brief interview with Ines on that spot, unobserved, under the shelter of the wall, he could make her understand his purpose, and get her sanction for it, so that the restraints of custom, which they must bear, would be no real injury to them. He would be supported by the assurance of her love, and she by that of his intention (having ingratiated himself with her father during the splendid opportunity which would be afforded him by the proposed visit to Don Saturnino's coffee estate) to ask for her undowered hand. They would be in each other's society in the unavoidable interval, and that would mean their being happy, no matter how irksome the restrictions upon them might prove. Hugh had only just terminated his reconnaissance, and returned to the vicinity of the convent gate, when he descried Ines and her old nurse approaching. He walked quickly on, and, so far as he could tell, their meeting was entirely unseen. The street was quite empty.

As he approached he saw that Ines caught nervously at Teresita's red skirt; but she withdrew her hand in a moment, and returned his greeting with simple frankness, in which there was not a touch of coquetry or the slightest affectation of surprise.

"How shall I thank you," he said, "for giving me this blessed chance of seeing you, and for trusting me so much? Will you come with me to a place where I can speak to you without fear of interruption?"

"Yes, anywhere you will."

All her love of him was in her innocent, beautiful face, and with it a great sadness. She glanced towards the convent wall.

"It is down this way," said Hugh, and he turned into the paved passage. In a few minutes they had reached the space

beyond the garden boundary, and Ines found herself in an unknown region. The broad friendly grin on Teresita's face was assurance enough to Hugh that the proceedings were entirely to her mind.

"Ines," he said, taking her hand and kissing it rather solemnly than ardently, "you know that I love you?"

She trembled visibly, and the rich colour lessened in her cheek, but she said simply:

"Yes, I know."

"And you love me, Ines?"

"Yes."

He kissed her hand again, and held it tenderly, as he walked by her side.

"He will surely kill Norberto," thought Teresita, and her black eyes rolled in excitement.

"You would be my wife, if you were free?"

"I would."

"I know that you are not free, that you are bound to your cousin."

"I will never be his wife. I wanted only to tell you that I have either to marry him or to enter that convent, and I have chosen."

"But you cannot do it. You must be my wife, Ines, and come to my country and my home with me."

"They would not let me," she said, with a childlike look and tone of helplessness; "they would not let me."

"Oh yes, they will; they must. Listen, darling, for our moments are precious, and I have to speak to you as never lover yet spoke to lady, with assurance and authority, though none was ever a humbler suitor in his heart. Your cousin would have been your father's heir but for your birth and your half-brother's, and your betrothal to him is only a compensation for a loss of money, to that extent by which your own inheritance is not decreased by the boy's claim. Is not this so?"

"Yes," said Ines, wondering how he came to know.

"I heard the story from Rodney, and perhaps you could not understand what it made me feel, because you are accustomed to the idea. I cannot tell you now. But, if your cousin were to be compensated; if he were to be put into possession of the sum which you would bring to him as your dower; would he not consent to set you free, considering that if you enter the convent he will equally lose the money, and that you are resolved not to marry him? I don't think he loves you, Ines."

"He, Norberto, love me!" she exclaimed, pausing, and expressing in tone and gesture both incredulity and disgust. "He hates me, and I hate him; but he would not give me up, even if he did get all the money, for the sake of revenge. He would make me go into the convent, even though they could not force me to marry him; he would never let me escape him in any other way. It is useless to think of such a thing."

"It is not useless, my Ines—yes, I will call you mine, for ever and ever, as I called you mine when you lay senseless in my arms, and death seemed to be within a hand's breadth of us. Bad as this man is, he is not the earthly ruler of your fate; he is but an enemy to be conquered, and, if I can, I will conquer him in fair, open strife, with your love for my strength, and yourself for my prize."

He shook his brown curls, and his grey eyes sparkled.

"He will surely kill Doña Mercedes, too," thought Teresita. "The saints be praised that sent him here to do it!"

"Your father has the decision in his hands, Ines; he can give you to me, if he will; and this—this person who would marry you against your will, if he could, or have you imprisoned for life because he cannot, would have no voice in the matter. My darling, your father is well disposed to me already; he declares that he owes me a great debt of gratitude, and, circumstanced as we are, I see no harm in letting him think so. He surely loves you dearly!"

"I don't know," said Ines forlornly; "he loves Doña Mercedes and my little brother so much better, that I am hardly of any consequence to him."

"Yet he was greatly agitated the other night?"

"Ah yes; he is very kind sometimes; but he forgets me when there is nothing particular the matter."

"But even so; he is not unjust; he is not cruel; and if I can go to him after a time, when I know him better, and tell him that I love you and hope to win you with his consent, and that your fortune is nothing to me—that I do not think of it, and would not touch it, and thus show him a way out of his difficulty, surely he will consent? He cannot wish you to be either a miserable wife, or a life-prisoner; he will not refuse to give you to one who loves you, and who will pass all his life in making yours happy."

With what fervour he told the old, old story ; with what conviction he made the old, old promise ! With what joy and misery, with how little hope and how much dread, the girl heard him ! His words were like a glimpse of heaven ; but the knowledge in her own breast was the dark cloud that shut it from her view. She answered only by tears.

"Ines, Ines," said her lover, losing his calmness and self-control, "do not cry ; do not make me lose heart by refusing to share my hope. Is not what I say reasonable ? Would not any father who had natural feeling listen to such a prayer as mine ? He cannot desire your misery, and if he does not, what can hinder his listening to me ? Our fate is in his hands, and I can prove to him that I am not all unworthy of his sweet daughter. I am a gentleman, and although not a rich man, I can give my wife a home which she will not think too mean. My father and my sister will welcome you, darling, and you shall not miss the sunshine of your country, for you shall have all the brightness in your life that the most devoted love can give. Smile on me, dearest ; do not look so sad. Have I said anything that is not reasonable ?

"No, no ; it is all true, and it might be ; my father might listen to you, and set me free from my cousin, if it were only himself that would have to decide my fate."

"But surely it is Don Saturnino only ?"

"No ; there is another. Doña Mercedes has such power over my father that he does everything she wishes, and he would never do anything that she opposed."

"But why should she oppose us ? She is herself a happy wife and mother. Why should she wish to condemn you to such a fate as either marrying your cousin or going into the convent ?"

"Because she hates me ! Yes, indeed—she hates me. As much as Norberto does."

"Impossible !"

"No, no ; it is quite true. I don't know why it is, because I have never intentionally displeased her, and she has no reason to be jealous of the very little love my father spares me ; for it takes nothing from the love he gives her and her child. It is I that should be jealous, by right, and not she. And perhaps I was jealous—before—but I don't mind it now, and, no matter what comes, I shall not mind it ever again ; not even when I am shut up here out of her way, and everybody's, and forgotten."

Again she glanced at the walls of the convent, and her lover's eyes, fixed eagerly upon her face, read at least a portion of her thoughts, and read them with joy. Hugh was no less selfish than any other lover, and the supreme concern for him was to be well assured of his own position in the girl's heart. What an assurance her words gave him ! Here was a grief, cruel and constant, hard to bear indeed, and torturing to a nature so sensitive as that of the beautiful young creature who told so forlorn a story so simply ; but the sweet that he gathered greedily from its bitterness was the admission that he was all in all to her now. He loved her, she loved him, and no other affection, no other passion, not even jealousy, could live any longer in the presence of the stronger than them all. With passionate ardour, and pride that well became him, he thanked her for the precious assurance that her words conveyed, and declared that she should not be taken from him by any power that Doña Mercedes could wield.

"I was told that she was on your cousin's side ; that she supported this cruel and unjust claim ; but I did not believe it. Rodney told me, and implied that she was condemned for doing so. Still, even though she has done so up to the present, why should you think she will put your father against me now ? Hitherto, there has only been the one alternative to your cousin's claim ; and you know that she knows you will not marry him ?"

"I am sure she knows. I have never concealed my feelings ; but her plan has always been to put them aside, as though they were the whims of a child, and beneath her notice. She has never said a word to me ; but I know her ways and my father's too well to be mistaken. She speaks of my marriage as a certain thing, to other people, before my face, and if I dared to appeal to my father, would not allow him to listen."

"She cannot prevent his listening to me. And, dearest, you have not reflected that if your father will give you to me, you will be taken away from her dislike and jealousy ; she will never have to trouble herself about you any more. Mine only ; mine for ever ; we should leave them to the things they prize more highly than your happiness, and live in my country only for our own."

His tone was even more persuasive than his words, and his handsome, manly face reflected the feelings that animated him.

"Think," he continued, "of the unreasonableness there would be in Doña Mercedes interfering against us. What has she to gain?"

"My misery," said the girl with strong conviction, "and the favour of my cousin, who would do anything for her if she helped him to his revenge on me. Do you think that he will not hate me all the more if it comes to his ears that I might be happy in a distant country with——?" She hesitated, and Hugh finished the sentence for her.

"A truer lover than he? Yes; I can fancy a bad man, as he must be, resenting the knowledge bitterly; but after all, we have not to think of that. Let him resent it; let him hate you. We shall be too happy to care for the love or hate of all the world beside; you will cease to remember that your cousin exists, and I do not believe that he will dare to influence your father, or could do it if he tried. Dearest, let us look at the bright side of the position; we have been looking only at the dark. Let us believe that reason and your father's affection will prevail, that love and truth will be stronger than hate and cruelty. I will do all I can to win Don Saturnino's esteem and confidence in the few days that we can command, and during that time we shall see each other, without your cousin being present. He will not even suspect that I am anything beyond a casual acquaintance, until I have had time to make my proposal to your father without the appearance of impudent presumption."

Ines, remembering with a shudder the expression she had detected in Norberto's face when he found her talking to Hugh at the theatre, felt only too sure that his suspicions were already awakened. She would have told Hugh of this fear if she could; but frank and free as had been their mutual avowals, she could not bring herself virtually to say to him: "My cousin has already seen in my face and heard in my voice that you are his successful rival. The mischief is done."

"He will not stay away an hour longer than he can avoid," said Ines; "and he will watch me all day long when he comes."

"Then I must only try to get into your father's good graces as speedily as possible, and hope to be master of the situation before he arrives."

Hugh spoke in a cheerful tone, but she could not shake off the chill which the mention of Norberto had given her. With

the fondest words he strove to inspire her with his own hopes, and laying aside for a moment the serious points which he was urging, he asked her to let him hear her call him by his name.

"You have been 'Fair Ines'—fairer than the Ines of our English poet's verse—in my presumptuous thoughts ever since I saw you first," he said.

"And you called to me, 'Ines, Ines,' when you came to save me in the theatre."

"I believe I did. I was very bold; but one does not mind one's manners in an earthquake. Now, dearest, tell me you love me, and call me by my name."

"But I do not know it."

"My name is Hugh."

"Hoo—Hoo—I cannot say it! What is it in French?"

"Hugues, or Hugo."

"I cannot say it," she repeated pettishly; "have you no other—no saint's name?"

"I am afraid I have no saint's name," he answered, smiling, "but I have a second name; it is also a harsh one—it is Henry."

"Ah, Henrique, like the Señor Rodney. I can say that; I like that."

"Yes, in your own tongue; but it is English Henry, not Spanish Henrique."

"No matter; I like it. I shall call you Henrique."

"Very well; so be it. I part cheerfully with a name your sweet lips cannot utter. Tell me in Spanish: I love you, Henry."

And she told him.

At that moment Teresita interposed. Her quick ear had caught a sound on the inside of the garden-wall, and she warned the lovers.

"The hand-cart is coming down the path," she said; "the gate will be opened; somebody will come."

"Adieu," said Ines, hurriedly withdrawing her hand from Hugh's clasp, and she added the Spanish valediction, "Go with God!"

"Good-bye, my beloved, my wife that shall be," said Hugh fervently. They parted and went different ways; Ines and Teresita retracing their steps through the stony passage to the great gate of the convent. Hugh followed the path, which led him past the backs of a long line of gloomy houses to a steep street from whence the bay became again visible, and the Calle de Santa Rosa was easily attainable.

Hugh's mind was in a strange confusion. The triumph of the successful lover was no doubt uppermost in it; but not all the

sweetness of that triumph could quell his uneasy sense that it had been gained by means which he could not wholly excuse ; even though the notion of measuring them by the Harley Street standard of proper behaviour should be rejected as absurd and out of place.

He was well disposed to evade self-reproach in the matter by putting the blame on the customs of the country, and easily worked himself into a state of righteous indignation against the unnatural restrictions which rendered it necessary to resort to subterfuge of the kind he had just been practising. He could not, however, escape from the knowledge that it is right to observe, and wrong to violate, the social laws of the country in which one happens to be. Or from anxiety, which became more pressing as the excitement of his interview with Ines subsided, respecting the view that Rodney would take of the position, when the time should arrive for telling him what he had done. Had he even been disposed to reveal the matter to his friend at once he could not have done so, for Rodney was absent. An American vessel had come into the harbour of Santiago on the preceding day, and was now lying out in the bay. The captain of the *Manhattan* was one of Rodney's innumerable friends, and he had gone on board the ship to pay him a visit.

In meditative mood Hugh paced the studio ; that abode of art in which he had proposed to do sound and satisfactory work ; but which, he now knew, was destined never to witness any such effort on his part. He could not put order into his thoughts ; they were with Ines, following her into the convent. He wondered what she had to do there, and whether her friend the nun was inquisitive or suspicious, and would find out that anything had happened ; he wondered how Ines would stand a cross-examination if she did. He tried to picture to himself what the visit to Don Saturnino's country place would be like, and resolved to behave with such prudence that Doña Mercedes should not suspect either his designs with respect to Ines, or his altered opinion of herself. If he could so manage as to commit Don Saturnino to an answer without an interval for consideration or consultation, he might defy the subsequent machinations of Norberto de Rodas and Doña Mercedes. Don Saturnino would not break his word. From the father of his love to his own father was a natural sequence in Hugh's

reflections, and he recalled, with some misgiving, what he had said to Ines about Dr. Rosslyn.

He had never thought of his father at all, and but rarely of his sister, since the moment when he had seen Ines de Rodas for the first time, and fallen in love with her then and there. The impetuous assurance he had given Ines of a welcome from them had been uttered without thought. Of Liliás Merivale he might indeed feel secure ; it would be enough for her that Ines was the beloved, the chosen of her brother ; but what Dr. Rosslyn would think was quite another thing. As Hugh paced up and down in the studio, indifferent to the heat which generally led him to do his thinking horizontally, he recognised with very unpleasant distinctness the improbability that his father would extend any such welcome as he had sketched for Ines, to a daughter-in-law who was at once a foreigner, a Catholic, and portionless. Not that he was going to be discouraged by anything of that kind, he said to himself in the glow and fervour of his young love ; let him but win Ines, and he would suffice to her for all. So the time wore away in much thinking over his great project, so far advanced by the successful venture of that day ; in much dreaming of the beautiful girl whose story had stirred his indignant soul, and whose charms had captivated his heart and his fancy.

Again that day Hugh saw Ines. It was at the *Retreta*, whither he and Pepito Vinent went by previous agreement. The *Plaza de Armas* was as gay as if the earthquake of the night before last had occurred a decade or two ago ; among the promenaders were the most distinguished persons of the city, and Hugh would have been interested in observing the manners and customs of an assemblage so representative and unfamiliar, had he been able to distract his thoughts from one incident of the scene.

Ines had received his salutation with a vivid blush, which she dexterously concealed from eyes less keen than her lover's, by a quick movement of her fan. Doña Mercedes's manner was changed ; and this disconcerted, even alarmed Hugh. Graceful she was, as she could not, or would not, cease to be under any circumstances, but she was cold. Yesterday her bearing towards Hugh had touched the point of friendship ; to-day it had receded to the verge of mere acquaintance. The change was effected by the slightest shades of

manner, by those fine gradations of tone, attitude, and expression, produced at will by women of the world, and which it is equally impossible for those to whom they are directed to ignore or to resent. What did this change signify? What had caused it? Had Doña Mercedes detected him? Had the stolen interview of the morning been discovered? No. A glance and a slight shake of the head had replied to the question which his eyes had furtively addressed to Ines. That secret was safe. But with this knowledge Hugh was forced to be content; there was no means by which he could learn the meaning of a change which presented a formidable obstacle to his project at the outset. He was lost in conjecture while going through the routine of the Retreta with his obliging and amusing friend. He blamed himself for some unconscious shortcoming, some sin of commission or omission against Cuban etiquette; but he still more inclined to the belief that he was "suspect" in the handsome, strange blue eyes which had looked at him so kindly yesterday, but which to-day glanced at and away from him with polite indifference.

Not one of Hugh's conjectures went near the truth, that Doña Mercedes had received a warning hint from Norberto de Rodas.

A DAY'S TRADE.

A LOW, whitewashed, felt-roofed bungalow or factory, which stands above a vast stretch of flat beach, shrouded in the mist of daybreak. Through the haze nothing can be seen of the gigantic breakers curling inshore; only the dreary sound of them is heard as they break, and at last run hissing up a line of coralled seaweed of every hue of purple, yellow, green, and pink.

But now the sun rises over the yellow uplands of the coast of the New Congo Free State of South-West Africa, and on that part of it where it borders on Angola—uplands dotted with clumps of forest and covered with grass over the head; the whole a wilderness of rank growth, traversed at long intervals by the paths of the natives to their scattered towns of mat huts.

Before the sunlight the sea-mists vanish and the billows become visible, tumbling over in unvarying regularity, and striping the sea on all sides. To north and south the coastline trends away, and its sameness is broken only by the low headland on

which the factory is perched, round the base of which twines a river, closed by a sand-bar, which converts it for a time into still lagoons.

As yet there is no sign of life about the solitary factory; the house-boys, each wrapped in his blanket, still lie about its broad verandah; and in the huts, huddled up in one corner of the mat-fenced and sandy yard, still slumber the native "headmen", hammock-bearers, boatmen, watermen, krooboyos, and woodmen; and in the galley the cook and cook's-mate lie beside the oven. In the centre of the yard is a flagstaff, and beside it is an old honey-combed cannon on a wooden carriage, and to this carriage is chained by the wrists a thief, who lies with his face on the sand.

The shore-side of the headland slopes precipitously to the river, and upon its farther bank there appears suddenly, filing through the grass, a company of eighty to a hundred black men, who splash through the shallow water, laughing and talking at the highest pitch of their voices. Each man carries on his head a bag of produce, and a dozen of them have slung upon poles six tusks of ivory. A few wear a cotton cloth round their shoulders, but the majority cover their loins and no more. They carry spears, or have spear-pointed knives or common white-handled table-knives stuck in their loin-cloths; and all wear some sort of ornament, if it be but a single string of beads or a strip of brass wire.

As they climb the bank and come in full sight of the factory they raise a shout which is heard by the "headmen", who struggle to their feet, and two of them hurry out to greet the men, while the other one runs to the factory to rouse the white man. At the door of the white man's room he stirs up with his stick the white man's boy—still asleep across the mat—and the boy, after a kick or two in the blanket, rolls out of it and wakes his master, who, in pyjamas and sleeping-shirt of trade-cloth, comes out into the long, bare room, which serves him as dining and reception room in one. A sallow and generally wasted appearance has the trader; and his assistant—a strip of a lad picked up cheap in England and shipped to the coast—who presently shuffles out of his bedroom, looks even more reduced and enervated than his master.

The headman makes his salaam to both, and announces that "plenty trade live for come one time", which is his way of saying

that plenty of trade is coming quickly. A tall, burly negro is he, with well-covered ribs and shoulders, over which he throws a bright-patterned shawl-piece for his day-dress. As he does this his necklet of pipe-coral beads, and heavy armlets of bright brass, twinkle in the sunlight. He stalks out, and the two white men proceed to discuss their early breakfast, which with both is nothing heavier than the yoke of a raw egg beaten up in gin. After this the assistant shuffles round under the verandah to the door of the great store or "cargo"-room, as it is called, before which the men are already squatted in two long rows, with their bundles of trade beside them. They rise with a murmur of approval as the white man unfastens the letter padlock of the door—a lock which, requiring no key, prevents any surreptitious opening of the door—and all try to crowd into the room, where the foremost are brought up by a rail which fences them from the treasures the room contains.

There are shelves upon shelves of pieces of "panno da costa"—blue-and-white figured cottons—cotton stripes and checks; cotton domestics, coloured and plain; satin stripes; blue and red baft; handkerchief and shawl pieces; fancy prints; fancy rugs and blankets; and other descriptions of common cotton goods. On the floor, piled against the walls, are cases of French flint muskets, thin brass-rods and brass ware, machets, knives, beads, gin, liqueurs, casks of rum, crates of earthenware, and an assortment of odds and ends, from imitation jewellery to pocket looking-glasses. Separate from the factory is the powder-house.

When a sufficient number of the men have crowded into the room to fill the space before the rail, they are admitted through it by the headmen, and squat in squads upon the floor before the weighing-machine, at which the trader takes his seat; while his assistant stands at the shelves, ready to redeem the little chits or "books", as they are called, which the senior man will give for the number of "longs" which he may agree to pay to each man for his produce. The produce—in little mat bags containing from ten to thirty-two pounds (an arroba), and sometimes but a handkerchief full of rubber, pea-nuts, or gum copal—he puts into the scale. If it is satisfactory in quality it is bargained for in the "longs" referred to—so many for so many pounds of pea-nuts, rubber, or gum, according to the value of the produce. On the first

bargain made there depends much, as the most experienced and wily old black usually offers the first bag of produce of each kind. By the price he obtains all the others are guided, and, where there are more factories than one in a station, where he goes they all follow.

After the bag of produce is bought or "passed in," as the term is, it is paid for in the various articles of the trade, at the discretion chiefly of the trader—that is to say, no native can have his produce paid for solely in one article of trade. He cannot have all cloth, or all muskets, or all powder; but he must take a selection of articles, the relative values of which are fixed by the "long", the standard of quantity and quality. This consists of six yards of common cotton cloth, or panno da costa; less of finer cloth, according to quality; more of coarser cloth; and so on until every article of the trade to muskets and gunpowder, the most valuable in it, are disposed of in relation to the "long".

As the bags are rapidly passed in, the contents are emptied out in heaps on a clear space of the floor, and then the ivory men, or "bushmen" as they are called, knowing they have the more valuable article to sell, though small in quantity in the present case, come forward, and one of them unslings the tusk he has, and places it in a spring balance. It is examined for cracks, and the hollow root probed for mud or stones, and after the weight is got at, a "mouth" or offer is made to the native "gentlemen", or brokers of the "cabucca",* in three articles of trade—muskets, powder, and cloth; so many muskets, so many kegs of powder, so many yards of cloth, according to the weight of the "tooth" and the value of ivory. This is called the "bundle", which is afterwards divided into a great many articles of trade, according to fixed rules between the white traders and the "gentlemen" or "brokers", and at each exchange these "gentlemen" and the "headmen" of the factory keep something for themselves from the "bushmen". The method of buying ivory is distinct from that of buying any other kind of produce, and is intricate, and is supposed to be made so partly in order to puzzle the "bushmen" as to the real value of the ivory they have to sell. These "bushmen" bring it from the very far interior, whence they have travelled for months, and are easily bewildered, being, naturally, not

* A "cabucca" is a caravan of ivory.

nearly so sharp as the men of the coast tribes, who bring in the lesser kind of produce, and every man of whom is a born haggler.

As with the other kinds of produce, what is given for the first lot or "tooth" offered is the criterion of the relative value of all, and so difficult is it to fix a price, and so long a haggle takes place, that the "gentlemen" are told more than once to take it away. But they always come back to the charge, asking another keg of powder, or another gun, and coming down to a bottle of gin or a "long" of cloth, and then to something for "top" of the "bundle", which is always expected, and then the "dash", or further present, and, top of all, the "matabicho" (Portuguese, "kill-the-worm") or drink. In fact, there is no end to the "squeezing" to which the white man is subject in the trade with these people, and this not only in ivory but in everything. Indeed, the trader has to be very wary to prevent being overreached, and finding when he makes up his prices that the cost of the goods he has paid away, and the freight, and the charges, have been too much for the market value in England of the produce he has bought.

It is well on to noon before the last tooth is bought and paid for, and the crowd of natives, who have been storming and laughing, chattering and grumbling by turns, are turned out into the yard, with their goods on their heads, to take their way to the "town". When all are out, the cargo-room door is locked, and the white men return to the dwelling part of the house, where the native boys are setting breakfast for them.

After each man has had his bath of river-water, and has got into the costume of the coast—white duck trowsers and a cotton shirt—he sits down to his meal of palm-oil "chop",* canned meats and butter, English bacon and ham, and bread baked by the cook, all set out on a long table in the big room, the walls of which are ornamented by two stands of rifles, while round their butts, and ranged by the skirting-board, are rows of beer, porter, and brandy bottles, so as to be handy, and, at the same time, under the eyes of their owners, whose most cherished possessions, along with a cask of soda-water, they are.

The furniture of the room is of the commonest—a sofa and a few cane chairs. Outside of the glassless windows is the real

lounging-place of the house—the verandah, on which are long canvas chairs, and in one corner hammocks slung on bamboo poles ready for resting or travelling in.

Through the verandah the sea-breeze blows freshly, tempering the mid-day heat of ninety degrees, and sending the trader asleep, while his assistant goes again to the hot and close-smelling cargo-room to pay away the barter for the daily rations of the many servants—so many glass-beads and a bottle or two of rum, according to each man's degree. With the beads and the rum the men buy their "chop" from the native "town" folk, from whom the assistant picks up what fresh provisions he can for himself and for his master. These consist chiefly of small fowls, tough and lean; woolless and skinny sheep; and now and again a small deer or a brace of red-legged partridges. Beef is almost unknown, unless a bullock is brought to the "point" by the ivory men.

When the rations are distributed, provisions paid for, and the produce bagged and marked, the day's work is over for the time for the assistant, and he also retires for his siesta, which lasts until the sun is fairly over the vast horizon of water to the west.

When both men are refreshed they turn their thoughts to work in hand, or to the punishment of the wretch at the gun-carriage; or, maybe, the native village king, under whose nominal protection the factory is, makes his appearance with a ragged crew, whose reception necessitates much "palaver" and drink before they will depart.

With the darkness come coolness and dinner, which is a repetition of breakfast, with tobacco and grog after it until the "watch" is set for the night. Then the "headmen" make their appearance for a "matabicho", and, maybe, with news of a big "cabucca" or of plenty of trade for the morrow, which information they impart squatted on their heels on the floor, the lamp-light lighting up their black faces, and glistening on their bangles and coral.

Then they go off to their huts and to their mats, and the trader, after a last look round the quiet factory, and listening for the cry of the "watch", also retires to sleep, hushed by the gentle rustle of the night breeze blowing off the land, and by the heavy murmur of the ceaseless surf, which now gleams phosphorescent on the beach, and crests with light the big rollers far out at sea under a starry sky.

* "Chop" means food generally.

ON CLEVER WOMEN—THEIR POSITION AND THEIR PROSPECTS.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

FIRST of all, I suppose, there must be some attempt at a definition of the word "clever". As this little paper claims to be neither scientific nor philosophical, I need not trouble myself to find one that shall be scrupulously exact and precise; neither shall I follow the somewhat bewildering fashion of a good many writers nowadays, who devote the first few pages of their books to earnest exhortations that you will bear in mind that the terms which they use mean in their mouths something, not only quite different from the meaning which you in your ignorance have attached to them, but quite different also from that which has been given to them by other philosophical writers. It will be quite enough for my purpose if I just bring to the fore the meaning which I think most people will give to the word "clever", if they come to think about it.

What, then, is a clever man? One who knows a great deal? Well, we not infrequently use the word to describe such a man; and yet I think we shall agree that it means more than that. Is it one who catches your meaning in a moment—one who seems to take in everything at a glance, as it were? That, perhaps; but something more. Is it a man who is always ready with some original thought, or one who almost startles you by the luminosity of his mind—the clearness and keenness of his judgment?

Well, these stray shots at the meaning may all be of use to us presently. To my own mind it seems that four things go of necessity to the making of a clever man; but before I state what these four things are, I must just acknowledge that we often use the word "clever" in a far narrower sense than that which I am about to give it—and use it thus, I think, not unfairly. Only then it must always take one of the little words "at" or "with" after it. A man may be wonderfully clever at music, for example; an artist is clever with his brush; a girl is often clever with her needle; and a boy may even be said to be clever at climbing trees. But you would hardly call the musician a "clever man"—by reason, that is to say, of his musical talent, and nothing else. Certainly it would be an abuse of language to call the dexterous little needlewoman, or the agile

climber, a "clever girl", or a "clever boy". It would seem, then, that the adjective "clever", when applied by itself to a man or woman, is a word of deeper, more serious meaning than this "clever at" or "clever with"; that cleverness is a quality of the mind; that it has in fact to do with the intellect primarily, although that intellect may so inform the eye, the ear, the hand, that their cleverness—their cunning, as the Psalmist has it—at their various undertakings, will be evident to all men.

But now for the four qualifications which I think necessary to a clever man. First of all, he must have the power to learn. Secondly, he must have the power to reflect. Thirdly, he must have the will to learn and to reflect—nay, perhaps I should put it even more strongly than that—he must love to learn and to reflect. Fourthly, though perhaps some might be disposed to say that this qualification must almost of necessity spring from the second, he must be able to create, as we somewhat loosely call it, seeing that all of us must work upon pre-existent materials, however unlooked-for may be our combinations, or our method of dealing with them. That is to say, he must have some power, though it need not be in large measure, to strike out lines of thought for himself, and, should circumstances permit, to add something to mankind's accumulated store of wisdom and knowledge. Should he possess this power in large and uncommon measure, he will then transcend the bounds of "cleverness", and be—a clever man indeed, but more than a clever man—a genius. Webster says that cleverness does not include even a high order of talent, much less genius; but I think it may fairly be stretched, and indeed is every day stretched, to include some measure of creative power—if it were only that, so far as I know, there is no other pair of words available but this noun and its adjective.

The word "talented" is an abomination in the ears of philologists; "able" hardly expresses all we want, and, moreover, its noun, "ability," has a somewhat different shade of meaning. "Intellect" and "intellectual" are the only words which satisfy me; but "cleverness" and "clever" have a far stronger hold upon ordinary parlance, and, with a very little stretching, as I said, seem to answer our purpose very well.

A clever man, then—or, let me say a clever woman, for it is of women chiefly

that I wish to speak—a clever woman must, to use one of the definitions we tried a while ago, “know a great deal”. She may or may not have much book-knowledge, but with the power to learn—and let me take with it the will to learn—she cannot fail to gain stores of knowledge, for knowledge is to be picked up everywhere: not only from books, but from men, from Nature, from the little affairs of everyday life: by those who are on the look-out for it. I have known many women who had enjoyed but a very desultory education, and who yet possessed a store of knowledge quite as large as, though of course very different in kind from, that acquired by others who had gone through a systematic training.

We pass on to the second qualification—the power to reflect. That this power is essential, none, I think, can doubt. There are some persons who seem to be overwhelmed, as it were, by the masses of knowledge which they have accumulated. Their minds are like a crowded lumber-room, with all the articles thrown in at haphazard. They can bring out one on occasion, if you ask for it; but as for classification, or intelligent appreciation of the relation which the various articles bear to each other, and the use to which they were intended to be put, it is hopeless to look for such a thing. They can learn, but they can make little or no use of their learning.

Or again, they may have the power, but not the will, to reflect. I imagine that this is a very common state of mind nowadays, even among intelligent people. How many of us possess very good abilities, as our friends say (meaning by this, I take it, that we can readily absorb knowledge), and possess even more than this—a very fair amount of will to learn, and a very fair amount of power also to think over what has been learned, to come to an at least intelligent conclusion with regard to the questions which we have heard discussed, to seize the salient features of a case and leave out of sight what is trivial and beside the real issue! We can do all this, but we simply do not care to. Our minds are lazy and inert; like the donkey, they will not work without being prodded and goaded; and so, when they are at last forced to exert themselves, the effort is so great and unaccustomed that they are wearied by it, and soon sink back into the state of indolence from which they were for a moment dragged. Every observant

person must have been struck by the clear-headedness, the discernment, the really fine insight, which a man who evidently seldom takes the trouble to think will occasionally display, when circumstances, or the stimulating influence of a busy-brained friend, have applied the spur, and for once made him show his mettle. But yet, how much more discernment and insight might that man show if his mind were not so unused to exertion! How much more free from prejudice would he be—how far more able to judge clearly where he himself is concerned, had he used himself to reflection as a matter of course, had he overcome the narrowness of mind, the proneness to trouble himself about nothing which does not immediately concern him, which is apt to beset us all!

As I write, there comes into my mind the remembrance of two sisters, one who had studied at one or other of the ladies' colleges, had come out in honours, and was generally spoken of as a very clever woman; the other, a girl whose abilities were good but not striking, who passed her school examinations with credit but never with éclat, who fell indeed quite into the shade by the side of her sister's brilliant attainments. And yet there could be no question, to my mind, which of the two was the better worth talking to. The elder seemed to throw off her cleverness, as she might have thrown off a cloak, as soon as she escaped from the atmosphere of class or lecture room. As far as I could tell, she made little or no use of the learning which she acquired. I should imagine that what was wanting in her was, not the power, but the will, to reflect; it did not seem to occur to her that, after all, learning is a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. The younger sister, on the other hand, was always ready to join in, or at least to listen to, any discussion that might be started, and could often bring light to bear upon some perplexing question, merely because it had been with her the subject, not only of study, but of thought. I would far rather have asked for her opinion than for her sister's; hers was the riper thought, the more matured judgment, in spite of her smaller abilities, and her inferior education.

I need not linger over the fourth qualification of a clever man or woman—some measure of creative power—partly because I think the power and the will to reflect will almost inevitably bring it in their train; partly because we have agreed that

creative power, if possessed in large measure, is more than cleverness, and must be designated by a higher name. Let us pass on to look more especially at cleverness as possessed by women—at its advantages, its drawbacks, and its dangers.

I should say that to young girls generally—to clever young girls, certainly—cleverness seems to be an unmixed advantage. How delightful to a clever girl of fifteen or sixteen, who then perhaps enters upon regular school-work for the first time—how delightful is it to her to find herself at the gates of a new world of thought—to feel the thrill of proud exultation which runs through her as she gazes at it, and exclaims with pardonable enthusiasm, “I can, at least, be monarch of all I survey!” How pleasant to see the gratification with which her masters gradually discover that one eager mind is drinking in all they say, and what trouble they will take to answer and even to anticipate her difficulties! How pleasant, again—albeit somewhat dangerous—to receive the respect and admiration which her school-fellows will lavish upon her, so long, at least, as she is sweet-tempered as well as clever—to respond to the many demands made upon her for “Just one thought, dear, to put into my essay on Procrastination; I’ve put in all the dictionary says, but that only fills up half my paper!”—to hear the invariable, “Oh, Ida will tell you that—she knows everything!” And then at the prize-giving, how stimulating is the sense, not only that she is the observed of all observers, but that she is receiving the reward of work well and earnestly done, as she bears away prize after prize, only tempered by the regretful wish that poor Melissa—who is so sweet, but anything rather than clever—and other kindred spirits, could have had something more to rejoice in than the success of their friend!

I have placed my clever girl in a school which is perhaps rather typical of the past than the present, though many such still exist. But should she find herself in surroundings more truly modern—should she attend a High-School, or enter Newnham or Girton, how many pleasures will still be hers! There is the keen pleasure of emulation; the delightful—if at times a little overwhelming—sense that her powers have now the fullest play, and that, however much she strain them, there will ever yet be new worlds to be conquered. Then there is the delight of contact with other

busy minds; the stimulus which those keener and deeper than her own supply; the—but I must not dwell longer upon pleasures which are quite real enough to those who have enjoyed them, and perhaps unimaginable to those whose tastes are different.

So far, then, a clever girl’s life seems to be all that is pleasant; and this it may perhaps continue to be, should her home-circle be an intellectual one, or should she elect to devote herself to teaching or to literary work. Even then she may find, as she grows older, that trouble comes upon her which seems to be mainly attributable to her cleverness. But before entering upon this, let us take a look at her in what I fear I must call ordinary society, such as is to be found, chiefly, I suppose, in the country, but also in towns.

I must confess I cannot think her position there an enviable one, so far, at least, as outward things are concerned. She comes home brimful of subjects, which are as Greek to the women with whom she mixes, and of the languidest interest—if of any at all—to the men. Her girl-friends are perplexed and evidently uncomfortable, if she comes out with one of the thoughts which fill her mind; her men-friends are almost equally surprised and startled, and begin to eye her askance. The best that she can hope for is to be rallied on her learnedness—to be laughingly called a blue-stocking, and told that she will be lecturing in Exeter Hall next. If she has little tact and *savoir-faire*, she may hold her own course and give vent to her thoughts with resolute disregard to the tastes of her companions. If she has tact—above all, if she has timidity, and a nervous dread of being laughed at—she will take a new line altogether; nothing but small-talk will escape her lips; her thoughts will be thrown back upon themselves; and, unless her mind be of a very vigorous order, they will probably dwindle away altogether.

Am I exaggerating? I know at the present time two girls, or rather young women, both of considerable powers of thought, whose opinions are at least as well worth hearing as those of many young men who give out theirs with the utmost confidence and dogmatism. Yet these two women have come independently to the same determination—namely, to resolutely suppress any sign of independent thought, or even of the possession of valuable

information, however hard it may try to escape them, when they are talking with the generality, at any rate, of mankind. Why? Because they know too well that men—as a rule—do not want originality of thought in a woman; because they discern that men—as a rule—like to teach rather than discuss with a woman; because they have observed the constraint, and the air of pulling himself together, with which a man approaches a woman who has the reputation of being “clever”; because they have seen, too often for their comfort, the start with which a male acquaintance has checked himself in the midst of an easy, though animated little monologue, at some chance remark or objection of theirs, which has shown him with a little shock that his listener is not entirely dependent upon him for information or instruction, as he had blissfully supposed.

Clever women do not like to be shunned or laughed at, any more than stupid or ordinary ones do; and they would like—well, why not say it out bluntly? it is no disgrace to them—they would like to be married. Can you wonder, then, if they take what seems to them to be the best way of making themselves attractive—or at least not unattractive? I cannot think my two friends are right; I doubt if they are even altogether wise in their own generation; but surely their action is intelligible, and almost excusable. Whatever may be the ideal of womanhood in future generations—and it may very possibly come to be much altered, seeing that men seldom condemn the higher education of women in the general, though they are apt to do so as regards individuals, sometimes in words, more often still in feeling—whatever, I say, may come to be their ideal of womanhood, there can be no doubt that, at present, cleverness is felt by a large majority of them to be quite superfluous, and even injurious.

I believe I may take as fairly typical the case of a brother and sister of my acquaintance, belonging to a family whose intellectual powers, though nothing specially out of the way, were above the average. The brother, who was just engaged, had come to announce to his sister the important event. “Is she clever?” asked the sister, after the more important question of her prettiness had been discussed. “Well, no; I can’t say she is,” admitted the lover, with a little apology in his tone. “But then I don’t care about that—I like a woman for the lighter parts.” The sister meditated a

few moments, perhaps a little ruefully. Then, “I suppose now, that Mary and I would be too clever for you?” she asked timidly. “Well, yes, if you’ll excuse me, you would,” was the answer. Now, Mary, at least, was a girl whom no one would have dreamed of accusing as satirical, sharp, or even learned. She was too reasonable, too thoughtful, too much on an equality—that was all.

We have only to look at the novels and novel-readers of the present day, to see that the clever heroine is by no means the favourite of either author or reader. The male and very often the female novelist’s heroine is a good, sweet, and often practical-minded girl; but as for cleverness—it is generally conspicuous by its absence. When it does appear—for novelists must have a change sometimes, like other people—it very often brings its fair possessor into trouble, or at best is treated with a half-amused, half-pitying indulgence. Our ideal woman, in short, must have plenty of heart, but intellect is quite unimportant, and, indeed, perhaps better absent than present. What novelist, I wonder, would dare to make a George Eliot the heroine of his tale? I shall perhaps be met by the rejoinder that she herself has done it—that Maggie Tulliver, as even she herself was not unwilling to allow, was intended for herself. That is true to a certain extent; but Maggie Tulliver is George Eliot with the intellect left out. She is full of fire, full of ardent affection, of insatiable longings, of keen sensitiveness to joy and pain, even as was George Eliot herself. But of the commanding intellect which, conjoined with her other gifts, has made George Eliot one of the greatest influences of our time, there is scarcely a trace.

I do not mean for one moment to say that George Eliot’s cleverness prevented her from being properly appreciated. I suppose that no woman ever had more real and more devoted friends, both male and female, than she; and to my mind she is a standing refutation of the theory which I believe many of us hold—that a woman’s amount of heart varies in inverse proportion with her amount of brain. What I do say is this—that our ideal woman is apt to be brainless; that our first impulse is to shrink from a clever woman, as we would shrink from a misshapen and unnatural-looking creature.

Whether we have any justification for so doing is a question that I hope to deal with in another paper.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

SURREY. PART I.

No other county, not even Middlesex, is so closely connected with London in its annals and traditions as Surrey. The Court and the City have furnished its most distinguished residents; its great houses, its manors and mansions, have been occupied by a succession of settlers, the élite of court, and camp, and busy mart; while few, if any, great families have risen from the soil, or have become great from the extent of the possessions within its borders. And thus the chronicles of the county are fragmentary and personal in their character. There are no great ruins of ancient castles, nor—putting aside one rather hazy battle with the Danes at Ockley, and a more famous imaginary contest at Dorking, which, happily, has not yet been fought—are there any battle-fields to be explored, while of old abbeys and priories there is little left but the names and the associations.

On the other hand, what a pleasant county it is to explore! with its bold downs and sandy dells, its shady, winding lanes and breezy commons, its quaint and peaceful villages; while every now and then some old Tudor manor-house, or some ancient timber-dwelling, or some homely village church with ancient mouldings cut out of the native chalk, rewards the rambler's search.

And then to a Londoner the whole county is so accessible. He is there at once without extensive preparations. He has only to cross London Bridge, and without more ado he may make a beginning of his perambulation of Surrey.

At first sight it seems to be an underground world we are exploring. Far below the busy thoroughfare, beneath the dry arch of London Bridge, are streets like tunnels, warehouses stuffed with produce, huge drayhorses issuing from subterranean stables—a twilight region redolent of malt and hops, with the busy Borough Market bringing the scent of the hay, to say nothing of the aroma of carrots and turnips, the flavour of freshly-dug potatoes, and the fragrance of rosy-cheeked apples, into what may be considered the pit of the great theatre of this world of London. Our thoughts are running on playhouses, for close by was the famous Globe Theatre of Shakespeare's days; but there is nothing to remind us of it now. All is Barclay and Perkins's huge brewery, and the whole

neighbourhood is changed beyond recognition. Still, there is the handsome old church of St. Saviour's as a landmark, the cathedral of this lower world—a veritable poet's corner, for here beneath the pavement of the choir lie John Fletcher and Philip Massinger, the contemporaries of Shakespeare; while under a handsome altartomb is the recumbent effigy of John Gower, the author of the *Confessio Amantis*, who might have called Chaucer friend and brother.

St. Saviour's is more properly St. Mary's Overy, and marks the site of an early Saxon nunnery, part of whose endowments was the ferry, which existed before the bridge was built. The nunnery became a college for priests under Norman rule, and at the dissolution of monasteries was purchased by the joint parishes of St. Mary Magdalene and St. Margaret's for their parish church.

Close by St. Saviour's once stood Winchester House, a palace of the Bishop of that diocese, an early Norman building, solid and sombre; which was deserted by the Bishop for Chelsea early in the seventeenth century, and served for some time as a prison for proscribed Royalists, Sir Kenelm Digby being amongst the number. Then, at the Restoration, the house was demolished, and the park sold for building purposes.

All along the great highway from the south were scattered the houses and lodgings of such of the great dignitaries of the Church as had their preferments south of the Thames. On the south side of Tooley Street, opposite St. Olave's, stood, in Stow's time, a great house with arched gates that had belonged to the Prior of Lewes. This was afterwards converted into an inn, with the sign of The Walnut Tree. A little way eastward of the church was another great house of stone and timber, belonging to St. Augustine's, Canterbury. Then the Abbot of Bath had his pleasant seat on Thames Bank, just below London Bridge, and streets known as the Maze and Maze Pond long commemorated the gardens of the abbot's house. Not far off were the lodgings of the Abbot of Faversham, and he of Chertsey also had his quarters in the neighbourhood.

And yet the presence of these holy fathers did not ensure the respectability of the neighbourhood. Along Bankside were the Stews—of evil fame—houses which at one time belonged to Sir William Walworth, Lord Mayor of London, and the

burning of which by Wat Tyler's rebels is thought to have prompted that historic stroke with the dagger which dispatched the champion of popular rights.

All this assemblage of saints and sinners, Southwark owed to its position as the great meeting-place for the highways of the south. Here was a great centre for Roman highways, and the main lines of traffic have followed the same tracks ever since.

Southwark was governed by its own bailiff till 1327, when the authorities of the City of London, finding that the place was a refuge for malefactors and others escaping from the City jurisdiction, obtained from Edward the Third a grant of the ville, the Lord Mayor henceforth to be bailiff. After a few years the inhabitants recovered their privileges, and it was not till the reign of Edward the Sixth that Southwark became finally incorporated with the City. Even then there were privileged districts—the Clink was in the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Winchester, and another Alsacia of the south side of the Thames has preserved an evil reputation down to our own days; for slummy among slums is the Southwark Mint.

As often will be found to be the case, the most wretched dwellings have sprung up on the sites of the most dignified palaces. Opposite St. George's Church stood Suffolk Place, a mansion built by Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk—the cloth of frieze mated with cloth of gold, in the person of Princess Mary, the dowager Queen of France. But Brandon exchanged the house with the crown for the palace of the Bishop of Norwich, more conveniently situated for access to the court at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. Suffolk Place then became Southwark Place, and was used for coining money, and thus was known as the Mint, and had its privileges and immunities from arrest as a royal palace, although it only remained the property of the Crown till the reign of Mary, who gave the whole to the See of York. The Archbishop of the period very prudently sold the Queen's gift, and the great house was soon after pulled down, and the site became a refuge for all kinds of desperate characters.

Close by the Mint, at the south-west corner of Blackman Street, stood the old King's Bench prison, with the Marshalsea close by, and the county prison of Horse-monger Lane not far off; but prisons and prisoners are all gone now, and the once formidable county gaol is now a play-ground for children.

Then to the eastward lies Bermondsey, with its dense population, and marts for hides and leather, with only Abbey Street to recall its ancient priory of Cluniac monks, and Spa Road as the solitary reminder of its medicinal spring, discovered about 1770, once a place of resort, with tea-gardens about it, where displays of fireworks attracted the town, and a representation of the rock of Gibraltar was the precursor of similar displays afterwards continued in the Surrey Gardens—now built over—and at the more famous Cremorne.

The leather industry at Bermondsey owes much to the Protestant refugees of the period immediately following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. In the towns along the banks of the Seine the tanning industry flourished greatly in the seventeenth century, and the trade was chiefly in the hands of Protestants, who, just two hundred years ago, emigrated bodily rather than abjure their faith, and brought with them many improvements in the art of preparing leather.

We are now in the immediate neighbourhood of the Surrey Docks, the oldest of which was opened in 1696, and called the Great Dock. In 1728 this dock was leased by the South Sea Company, one of whose projects was a revival of the Greenland whale-fishery, and thus the dock was called Greenland Dock—a name which still is kept up. And here begins the Grand Surrey Canal, which, in spite of its name, will not carry us far, as its farthest limit is reached at Peckham.

Following the natural order of things, and proceeding along the river bank, after passing through streets of hop-warehouses, redolent just now of the delightful perfume of the newly-packed hop-pockets, we shall come to Lambeth, always, from the earliest days, a famous ferry and crossing-place, where the name of Stone Street suggests the Roman road that reached the river at this point, while Horseferry Road, on the other side of the river, preserves the memory of the great ferry. The Saxon name of the place was, no doubt, Lamb-hythe—the hithe, or landing-place for lambs, which, probably enough, were driven down to this point on their way to their summer pastures on the marshes.

And here we come to the quaint red-brick palace of the Archbishops, with its fine Tudor gateway and Lollards' Tower. The site of the palace once belonged to the monks of Rochester, who exchanged it with my lord of Canterbury for other lands

of his, and thenceforward the history of the palace is intimately connected with the lives of the Archbishops and the general march of events.

By the palace-gate, where Cardinals and Princes alighted from their stately barges, and where Kings and Queens were frequent visitors, rose the humble workshops of the Lambeth potters, and the industry has here been carried on for centuries, till now the immense buildings of the great Lambeth Pottery seem to dominate the whole parish.

But there were wells also at Lambeth, and Lambeth Walk was once the promenade of the fashionable people who drank the waters. And Cupar's Gardens, which had formerly been the gardens of the Earl of Arundel, of marble fame, once occupied the approach to the bridge. Then, close by, were the famous gardens of Vauxhall, the name of which retains the memory of the ancient manor-house of the Fawkes family—gardens which were once fragrant with memories preserved by gossipping chroniclers, from the reign of Queen Anne downwards.

And then we come to Kennington, with, as its name implies, its once royal seat, inhabited by members of the royal family till as late a period as the reign of Henry the Seventh. A street that still bears the name of Prince's Road is said to have been called after the Black Prince, who was accustomed to ride that way from Lambeth; and a tavern called the Black Prince seems to have existed near here from early times. The common, now an ornamental park, was once the rival of Tyburn in the way of public executions, and many Jacobites of the '45 rebellion suffered on its sward.

Then there is Camberwell, which takes its name from a spring on Grove Hill, close to which it is said that George Barnwell murdered his uncle; and, returning to the Wandsworth Road, we may find among the florists in the neighbourhood some knowledge of the site of Tradescant's physic garden; and, following the river, presently there appears Battersea, within whose church is a fine monument by Roubiliac, to Bolingbroke, the friend of Swift and Pope. And hereabouts was the versatile statesman's home, a fine mansion, which was taken down towards the close of the last century, a portion being converted into a mill for grinding malt for a distillery.

Farther up the river we come to Wandsworth, where the little river Wandle, with

mill, and bridge, and rushing waters, and the canal, with its gaily painted barges, make a pleasant picture enough. At Wandsworth we come upon the Huguenots again, for the hat manufactory, which has long flourished in the neighbourhood, was founded by the Protestant refugees from Normandy. It was from Caudebec, a charming little town on the Seine, that the French hatters came to establish themselves in Wandsworth. "In France," writes M. Weiss, the historian of the Protestant refugees, "the manufacture of the 'chapeau de Caudebec' had been almost entirely in the hands of the 'reformed', who only possessed the secret of the compound liquid which serves for the preparation of the rabbit-skins, and hare-skins, as well as the fur of the beaver, which are used in the manufacture."

The secret of the manufacture was afterwards—in the middle of the eighteenth century—stolen from the refugees by a workman who had long worked for them, and who, carrying back the process to Paris, founded a great hat manufactory in the Faubourg St. Antoine. But up to that time, says our authority, "the French nobility, and all who prided themselves on elegance, wore no other hats than those of English make, and the Cardinals of Rome even, ordered their hats from the celebrated manufactory of Wandsworth."

The Frenchmen, it must be said, were not received with any effusive welcome by their brother traders in England. For while the felt hats made by the French refugees, and known under the name of Carlin's, had become the mode, so as to excite the jealousy of the English makers, these last complained bitterly of the preference accorded to these hats, which, according to their account, were both uncomfortable and inferior in durability and quality to their own make.

In the church of All Saints, Wandsworth, there is a monument to Henry Smith, Alderman of London, who died in 1627, at the age of seventy-nine years, leaving, with the exception of a few legacies, all his goods to the poor. Traditionally, Alderman Smith is known as Dog Smith, and it is said that he went about as a blind beggar, with a dog, and by prudence and economy, we will say, and the judicious investment of his savings, accumulated a large fortune. In Mitcham parish, so goes the story, Smith was collared by the constable and put into the stocks, and hence Mitcham was left out

in the cold in Smith's testamentary dispositions. All this story is scouted as the merest folly by critical enquirers, but even as so much folklore it is interesting, and there is certainly no clear light upon the history of Alderman Smith, nor any assurance as to how he came by his money. He certainly left a noble property, which should have immensely increased in value, but it is doubtful whether any poor man has directly benefited a halfpenny by his liberality, although many parishes in Surrey, Sussex, and Kent get a handsome sum yearly in aid of their rates.

Wandsworth shades off insensibly into Putney, which has its own character, however, of a pleasant little Surrey town with its high-street running up the hill, its warm, pleasant-looking houses and thriving shops. Something of this character will be lost, perhaps, by the abolition of the old wooden bridge, which is no older, however, than 1729, in which year it was begun and finished. The previous ferry across the river was of high antiquity, and is mentioned in Domesday, when it brought twenty shillings a year to the lord of the manor. In the high-street stands a charming Jacobean mansion, now called Fairfax House, which Black Tom himself probably occupied for a time, and of which Cromwell was, no doubt, sometimes an inmate. Cromwell, indeed, had his headquarters at Putney in 1647, when he kept his grip upon the King at Hampton Court, and the Parliament at Westminster, at the same time. In the church—pleasantly placed by the river just by the narrow approach to the old bridge, with its sundial that bears the happy motto, "Time and tide wait for no man"—in this church, it is said, the Cromwellian officers held their councils of war, sitting round the communion-table, after a few hours' appropriate discourse by their chaplain, Hugh Peters.

Another Cromwell, too, is connected with Putney—Cardinal Wolsey's secretary and supplanter, whose father was a blacksmith, or perhaps an ironmaster, of the parish. Gibbon, the historian, was also a native of Putney.

Following the river in the great loop it makes round the peninsula of Barnes—a shore familiar to many who have watched from the bank the Oxford and Cambridge crews at their practice, or in the excitement of the boat-race—there is Barn Elms, with some historic associations about the site, where stood an ancient mansion before the days of the present red-brick Georgian

edifice. Walsingham lived there once, and Queen Elizabeth may have sauntered under the elms, where is now a course for pony-races and polo-matches. Somewhere near, too, was fought that famous duel between the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Shrewsbury, when the frail Countess, it is said, disguised as a page, held the horse of her lover, and from a distance watched the encounter in which her husband fell. And there is Barn Elm Farm, still rural, where Cobbett wrote upon currency and anathematised the great Wen—meaning London—with an open ear meanwhile for the songs of birds and the mingled sounds of the farmyard.

Then we come to Mortlake, whose pleasant country churchyard suggests memories of the famous Dr. Dee, the wizard and astrologer, whose wonder-working crystals revealed the future of Queens and potentates. Dr. Dee lived in an old house to the west of the churchyard, and he lies buried in the church, while outside is the tomb of Partridge, the almanack-maker, a humbler adept in the mysteries of the stars. Dr. Dee's laboratory became, in after years, the site of a famous manufactory of tapestry, for which King Charles lent as patterns the great cartoons of Raphael, now in the South Kensington Museum. The tapestry-works perished in the frosts of the Puritan Commonwealth, and were only revived in our own times in the shape of the Royal Tapestry Works near Windsor.

Next follows Richmond, whose earlier name is retained in Sheen Common and Sheen Lane. The manor of Sheen was long a royal residence, and was the favourite home of Anne of Bohemia, concerning whom we may here quote Fuller: "It happened about this time that Richard the Second of England married Anne, sister to Wencelaus, King of Bohemia, and, although he had no children by her, yet the conversion of Bohemia may fitly be stiled the issue of their marriage. Indeed, this Queen Anne taught our English women modestie in riding on side-saddles, in exchange whereof the English taught the Bohemians true religion, first discovering the Romish superstitions unto them. For her courtiers here did light on the books of John Wicklief, and carried them into their own country, where Huss had the happiness to read, approve, and disperse the same. See here the pedigree of the Reformation, wherein Germany may be counted the son, Bohemia the father, and England the grandfather." So that here, where Anne of

Bohemia lived and died, we may, if we take the author of the *Worthies* as a guide, find the first seed of mighty changes.

The Queen died at Sheen, and Richard, in despair at her loss, ordered that the house where he had known so much happiness should be razed to the ground. And thus Sheen ceased to be a royal residence till the reign of Henry the Seventh, who, charmed with the situation, built a royal mansion in the park, to which he gave the name of the famous old castle in the North, from which he took his title of Earl of Richmond. Petersham took its name from the abbey of St. Peter's, Chertsey, to which the manor once belonged ; and Ham House was built, they say, for Henry, Prince of Wales, the elder brother of King Charles the First. Petersham Lodge once belonged to the Duke of Clarence, afterwards William the Fourth, and was pulled down and its grounds merged in Richmond Park.

This district, indeed, has always been favoured by royal personages, and Kingston still possesses the old coronation-stone of the Saxon Kings, and an old house in the high-street — it has not been recently demolished—which was known as the palace.

Then there is Claremont, in Esher parish, which originally was built by Vanbrugh for his own occupation, and was purchased of him by Holles Pelham, Earl of Clare, and afterwards Duke of Newcastle, who built a kind of folly in the form of a castle on a knoll in the park, and called it after his own title, Claremont. Then Lord Clive bought the place, whose grounds had been much extended by Lord Newcastle. Clive, going out to India, gave carte blanche to Capability Brown to build a house and lay out the grounds. The result was a bill for a hundred thousand pounds and the present mansion, which eventually was purchased, for much less, out of the national purse as a residence for Prince Leopold, afterwards King of the Belgians, and his bride—our poor Princess Charlotte, whose early death here in childbirth moved the nation's heart.

In Esher, too, was a manor of the Bishops of Winchester, where William of Waynflete, in the fifteenth century, built a stately house of brick on the banks of the placid river Mole. Wolsey retired to this house in the first days of his disgrace. Only the gate-house of it now remains.

At Sandon Farm, Esher, adjoining Ditton Marsh, once stood a hospital or priory, founded by Robert de Watville, in

the reign of Henry the Second. Its endowments were afterwards increased by one of the Percys, and supported a Master and six chaplains. But in 1349 the Master and all the brethren were carried off by the black death, and the property, falling into decay, was transferred to the hospital of St. Thomas in Southwark.

Another royal residence was Oatlands Park, acquired by Henry the Eighth in exchange for some other manor. Queen Elizabeth occasionally visited the house, and it was settled upon Henrietta Maria, the Queen of Charles the First, who here, in the old manor-house—pulled down during the Commonwealth—gave birth to a son, Henry of Oatlands, created afterwards Duke of Gloucester. The birth of Henry coincided with a severe visitation of the plague in London, to the victims of which the poet Cowley thus airily alludes in a courtly ode on the occasion :

Fate rids of them the earth,

To make more room for a great Prince's birth.

The young Prince, however, died, soon after the Restoration, without any opportunity of showing his greatness. Cowley, however, reaped the reward of his courtly poems in a lease of the dowager-queen's lands, to enjoy which he retired to Chertsey. On the death of Henrietta Maria, the estate was sold, and passed eventually into the hands of the Clintons. One of these built a fine house there, and his brother, who became Duke of Newcastle, made a famous grotto in the grounds, afterwards the scene of some of the Prince Regent's orgies, which is still in existence. Then the Duke of York bought the estate, but, while he was fighting in Flanders against the French revolutionary armies, the house was burnt down, and Holland built a new house for the Duke, which was sold, after the Duke's death, to pay his debts. A portion of this building remains as the Oatlands Park Hotel. At the foot of the terrace where stood the earlier house is a large piece of water, now called the Broad Water, fed by springs which communicate with the Thames.

Walton is Walltown, from Roman walls, of which some remains have been found. And in this parish are Coway Stakes, where Julius Cæsar is said to have forded the Thames, though some modern archaeologists will have it that Cæsar never reached the Thames at all, but that it was the Medway he succeeded in crossing. Here, however, was the first practicable ford over the Thames, though it seems as

if, at some time or other, the river had changed its course, and there is a local tradition of a flood by which Shepperton Church was carried away.

In Walton Church is another of Roubiliac's florid monuments, and there is a slab to the memory of William Lilley, the astrologer, who took up the mantle of Dr. Dee—a slab placed there by Elias Ashmole, the antiquary. There is also a curious brass of John Selwyn, with wife and eleven children, and another, apparently of the same Selwyn, on the back of a stag, whence the legend that Selwyn, who was, no doubt, one of Queen Elizabeth's rangers, jumped from a horse at full speed upon the back of a stag he was pursuing, and killed it with his sword. The proceeding does not seem to be very sportsmanlike, and perhaps we do injustice to the memory of Selwyn in repeating the story.

A little higher up the river lies Chertsey, the site of a once famous abbey, whose foundation is commemorated by Baeda the venerable. "Theodore, Archbishop, made Earconwald Bishop of the East Saxons, who had, before he was consecrated, built two famous monasteries, one for himself at Ceortesei . . ." But it is not easy to discover any traces of the abbey in a cursory visit to the town, although some foundations exist in gardens here and there, and excavations have been made among them by members of the Surrey Archaeological Society. The abbey mills nearer the river, in their imposing bulk and solidity, give one more lively notions of the former importance of the monastery of which they were an appendage. More in evidence is the Porch House, a good deal altered indeed, where the poet Cowley died. In this sunny nook the poet had many a jovial bout with his friends, and a favourite resort of them all was St. Ann's Hill, "a most romancy place," as Aubrey hath it, afterwards to be ne famous as the residence of another jovial spirit—Charles James Fox. And local report has it that in returning from one of his carouses, the poet fell in a ditch, and there remained in a very unpoetic condition till he was hauled out by some passing Samaritans. From this exposure it is said the poor poet never recovered.

Cooper's Hill now rises in the distance, the hill which Sir John Denham has made famous by his poem :

Here his first lays majestic Denham sung,
There the last numbers flowed from Cowley's tongue.

And at its foot are stretched the plains of Runnymede, with Egham lying among the rich lush meadows, the river winding through, and Magna Charta Island rising from the reeds and sedges. The tradition that Magna Charta was signed upon the island itself bears the stamp of inherent probability. Conferences between rival potentates and powers in the Middle Ages were, if possible, held on islands in a river course, where there was less danger of treacherous surprise. Neither King John nor his Barons were likely to dispense with any possible precaution, as each side distrusted and hated the other most cordially. And Magna Charta Island is now for sale, with the possibly identical stone upon which the Charts was signed—signed, that is, in the legal sense of the word, for there are no signs manual to the instrument, nor were such usual at the period. The neat Norman scribes would have considered their work ruined by the sprawling characters of the great men of the period; the signatures seem to have been all engrossed together, and it does not follow that because crosses appear against the names of princes, nobles, and prelates that they could not write after some fashion or other.

With Runnymede our survey of riverside Surrey comes to an end, and another paper must be devoted to the more rural districts, where the *genius loci* has not been altogether converted into a London sprite. And so we may take leave of the Thames in the words of the poet of Cooper's Hill, lines which have made the fame of the poem, that contains no others nearly as good :

Oh, could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
My great example as it is my theme!
Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;
Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full.

COUNT PAOLO'S RING. A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

CHAPTER IX.

THE pleasure which Nancie's engagement gave to Mrs. Monteith was somewhat damped by the news of Lansdell's serious illness, and almost obliterated by Nancie announcing in her quiet, resolute way that she intended going to the vicarage and remaining there until he was out of danger. For a few minutes sheer consternation held her silent; then a flood of indignant remonstrance poured forth, to which Nancie listened patiently and perfectly unmoved.

It was in vain that Mrs. Monteith wept and moaned—that she pictured what the world would say of such a breach of propriety—that she hurled the terrors of Mrs. Grundy before Nancie. The girl sat through the storm, with her hands clasped tightly on her lap and her pale lips resolutely closed, and listened, and, indeed, even smiled a little now and then, when Mrs. Monteith was more than usually ridiculous, but her resolution remained quite unaltered.

"I am sorry you take it in that way, mother," she said quietly, when at last there was a lull in the storm, and Mrs. Monteith, almost exhausted, lay back in her chair and wept more quietly; "very sorry, because it is no use. Nothing that you can say will make any difference to me."

"You were always as obstinate as a pig; I know that!" Mrs. Monteith said angrily; "but this beats all. What will your father say, I wonder, when he comes home?"

"Very much what you say now, I am afraid. Yet no," and Nancie's face softened; "father is always kind. He will be sorry for me, I know."

"And you mean to insinuate that I am not sorry? That's a hard thing to say of your mother, Nancie!" and Mrs. Monteith dissolved into a flood of tears again. "I am sure no one could feel more for you than I do, but"—and her voice grew solemn and impressive—"you are young and thoughtless, and just now you are excited—naturally enough, I admit—and your judgment is clouded by your grief; but I can see more clearly, and I tell you that this notion of yours is utterly and absolutely impossible. I could not, as your mother, give my consent to such a breach of decorum—to such a sin against propriety," Mrs. Monteith added grandly.

Nancie gave a little, bitter laugh.

"Propriety, in the sense you mean, and I parted company long ago, mother. We were never particularly fond of each other, you know, and we dissolved all connection some time ago."

"And your duty to your parents as well? I suppose that is forgotten too?" Mrs. Monteith said sarcastically.

"Not forgotten; only lost sight of in a higher duty," Nancie said gently.

Mrs. Monteith groaned.

"Higher duty? Nonsense! Oh, what will dear Lady Sara say?"

"Lady Sara's opinion is—as you ought to know by this time, mother—a matter of perfect indifference to me," Nancie said

calmly. "I am sorry to go against your wishes or father's, but I have quite made up my mind, and not a dozen Lady Saras, or the united censure of all the Mrs. Grundys in the kingdom, will keep me away from him if he needs me."

"You will wait till your father returns, at all events?"

"Yes, if there is no further bad news. Dr. Munroe has promised to let me know at once if there is any great danger," Nancie said with a sob. "If he is worse I shall go at once."

"And you will stay all night at the vicarage, and Mr. Holmes there as well?" Mrs. Monteith gasped. "Oh, I never heard of such a dreadful thing! You must have taken leave of your senses, Nancie!"

"No; I have only just found them, I think. Besides, what harm will Mr. Holmes do me? I suppose you would not like me to come backwards and forwards? It would not be safe, you know. I might bring the fever here," Nancie went on in her quiet, suffering voice. "Besides, Martha is there."

"Yes; so there is no need for you. Martha is a splendid nurse. I have often heard Mr. Lansdell say so."

"I am a splendid nurse, too," said Nancie, smiling quietly. "Oh, what is the use, mother, of going over the same ground so often? I have made up my mind to be with him, and only his absolute command, and perhaps not even that, would keep me away. Why, I remember when father was so ill with small-pox six years ago, and you sent us all to the seaside, you would not even have a nurse. You did all for him yourself."

"That was quite different, Nancie," but Mrs. Monteith's face softened at the remembrance of that time of anxiety and trouble; "I was your father's wife. If you were married to Mr. Lansdell it would be your duty to be with him, but you are not his wife—yet."

"Ah, you and I hold different views on that matter, mother," Nancie said very quietly, but with a deep thrill of emotion in her voice. "What is it that constitutes a true marriage—the ceremony in the church; the few words spoken by a clergyman or a registrar; the Archbishop's licence? No; a true marriage-vow is the promise given and received between a man and woman who love each other truly and with all their hearts—as we do," she added softly.

"I am surprised at you, Nancie ; I don't know where you get your ideas from," Mrs. Monteith said severely ; "not from me, I am sure. And I say again, that if you persist in going to the vicarage, you will grieve me very much. You know how Lucy Williams was talked about last year when she stayed at Scarborough with Captain Dacre. She said they missed the train, but nobody believed it, or took any more notice of her. I should be very sorry to know that my daughter," and Mrs. Monteith grew slightly hysterical, "was compared to the likes of her!"

All day long the same arguments were repeated and combatted ; the same ground travelled again and again. Nancie was very quiet, wonderfully gentle and patient, but Angela saw how great was the restraint which she put upon herself, and felt very sorry for her. And the slow hours dragged on, and six o'clock came, and still there was no news from Dr. Munroe, no sign of Mr. Monteith.

"No news is good news, dear Nancie," Angela said tenderly, coming to Nancie's side as she sat by the window, stitching with feverish energy at the square of satin on which she was embroidering a wreath of wild roses. "Dr. Munroe would have sent if he had been worse."

"Yes, I know." Nancie filled her needle with bright blue silk, and worked it industriously into the centre of her rosebud. "I wish father would come. Don't you think this will be very pretty, Angela?" she held up her work and looked at it with feverishly bright eyes. "I think I shall have it made up into a cushion. It will do for a wedding-present for—you. Why, what is the matter?" For Angela, in a little burst of passion and pity, had caught the work from her hands and flung it into the basket. She knelt down by Nancie's side, and threw her arm round her, and burst into a fit of tears and sobs.

"Oh, Nancie, Nancie, don't! If you would only cry, or sob, or do anything but just sit there, trying to work with your poor trembling fingers!" she cried. "Oh, my dear, I know what it is! I have been through it all myself. I remember when I was just like you now, suffering the same dull agony ; but my grief was greater than yours, for there was no hope for me. Oh, cry, my dear—cry! I hate to look at your dry, bright eyes!"

Nancie looked at her, and her face quivered ; but, with an effort, she resumed her self-command.

"No, I won't cry," she said. "Crying isn't the luxury to me that they say it is to some women. What is called a 'good cry' makes me really ill and unfit for anything, and I must keep up my strength, you know. Ah, there is Dr. Munroe!"

Her face changed suddenly from its expression of forced calmness to one of intense anxiety. She ran forward to the door to meet the doctor in the hall, then checked herself, and stood in the middle of the room, and waited till he entered.

"Well?" she said, and though her voice was quite calm and self-possessed, there was such an awful anxiety in her eyes that Munroe's heart bled for her. "Well, what news?" she repeated.

"Not much ; there is little or no change. I do not expect it for some days," Munroe answered gravely.

"Is he conscious? Has he asked for me?"

Nancie's eyes never once stirred from Munroe's face. That earnest gaze constrained him to answer more truly and freely than he intended to do. It was his private opinion that Nancie would be much better away from the sick-room. She was not very strong, and he knew that the task which lay before her, and which she was so eager to undertake, would be one that would try her strength to the utmost. He had meant to persuade her that her presence was unnecessary—that Martha was quite equal to the task of nursing Lansdell—but he could not but answer truthfully with those anxious eyes on his face.

"Yes; he asked for you—he asked if you knew, and he sent you his love. He said you were not to be anxious—that he was in good hands."

"Nothing else?"

Again the magnetic power of Nancie's eyes forced him to answer. He did so very reluctantly.

"He was only conscious a short time ; but, during his delirium, he called constantly upon your name—asked for you," he answered. "Perhaps, after all"—and now his professional anxiety for his patient overcame his anxiety to keep the girl he loved from danger—"if you are sure you are not afraid, it might be better if you were there."

"That is quite enough." Nancie's eyes brightened ; she looked up at him gravely. "I will be ready in ten minutes, Dr. Munroe, if you will kindly wait for me."

"But your mother, my dear Miss Nancie—does she approve of it?"

Munroe half repented his advice, half

longed to recall it. If—in the vague term which people use sometimes—anything happened to Nancie, would they not blame him, would they not say it was his fault?

"Mother knows all about it. No; she does not approve. She thinks it not proper," and Nancie gave a wintry smile; "but that does not matter. I am going."

"And Mr. Monteith?"

"I am not afraid of father. He will understand better than mother. He does not bow quite so devoutly at Mrs. Grundy's shrine. Besides, do you think"—and the clear voice thrilled with sudden passion—"that anything or anybody in the whole world could keep me back from him now—now that I know he needs me!" the girl cried passionately.

Her cheeks flushed—her eyes were flaming. For once in her life, Nancie's piquant face was absolutely beautiful. She gave a quick, scornful smile at the two faces that were watching her so intently, and ran out of the room upstairs to her own chamber. She hastily changed her silk dress for one of softer material, and put her dressing-gown, and brush and comb, and a few other necessaries, into a travelling-bag. Angela knocked at the door by-and-by.

"May I come in, dear Nancie? Can I help you," she said quietly.

"Please, Angela." Nancie smiled and nodded. "I want my slippers—the wool ones, dear—they have no heels and are quite noiseless; and the little lace ruffles for my neck—they are in the second drawer. Mr. Lansdell likes those ruffles, and—I think that is all. Now my hat. Where is mother?"

"In the library with Dr. Munroe, Nancie darling," and Angela's voice shook, and with difficulty she kept back her sobs. "You will be careful, won't you? You will remember how anxious we shall all be. Oh, he has the first claim, I know, and you are quite right to go—quite right. I should do the same myself if it were Noel who was ill," cried Angela, with a sudden flame in her eyes; "but still there are others who love you, Nancie. He is not the only one! You will think of us, won't you, dear, and take every care?"

"Oh yes, every care. Don't be afraid for me, Angela; I am always strong and healthy, you know. I had never a serious illness in my life. See, I have written a note to father," and she pointed to a letter on the dressing-table. "Tell him"—and her voice quivered—"how sorry I was to

go without his permission, and ask him to forgive me. Now I am ready, dear."

She took up her bag and walked quickly downstairs into the library, where Mrs. Monteith was talking to Dr. Munroe. On the table was a tray with some cold fowl and tongue and wine. Dr. Munroe was standing near it, and he looked up as Nancie entered.

"Now, Miss Nancie, before we go you must make what vulgar people call a good square meal," he said cheerfully. "You have taken little or nothing to-day, I hear. Come, begin."

He drew a chair forward to the table. Nancie shook her head.

"I can't! Indeed I am not at all hungry. I couldn't eat a morsel."

"Then you don't go."

"Very well."

Nancie with resolute patience sat down to the table, and forced herself to eat the food which Munroe placed on her plate, and to drink a glass of wine. Mrs. Monteith was rocking herself backward and forward in her chair, with her handkerchief to her eyes; occasionally she gave a loud sob or a still louder sniff, and at each sound Angela saw Nancie frown, and wince, and bite her lip impatiently. Dr. Munroe watched her approvingly.

"Now, that's a sensible girl," he said as she put the last morsel of food in her mouth, and pushed her plate away with a relieved air. "You feel all the better for it, I know? Keep up your spirits, have plenty to eat and drink, and you won't take any harm. Now, if you are quite ready, we will go—my horse is getting restless."

"I am quite ready."

Nancie sprang up from her chair, and took her bag in her hand. She kissed Angela hurriedly, then went across the room to the corner where Mrs. Monteith was still sitting, and paused before her chair.

"Good-bye, mother! I am sorry you are vexed," she said, and bent and kissed her, and then she followed Munroe from the room.

A groom was driving the dog-cart slowly up and down the avenue. Nancie sprang in, and looked back and waved her hand to Angela. She gave a deep sigh of relief as the horse, after a few preliminary plunges and rearings, settled down into a swift, steady trot. She was glad the parting was over, that she had been strong enough to carry out her resolution in spite of her mother's anger, and her spirits revived as they drove quickly down the

busy street, and the cool breeze blew in her face, and Munroe talked to her in his cheerful, matter-of-fact voice.

By-and-by the carriage stopped before the vicarage door. It was a large, rather handsome house, with a small plot of so-called lawn in front, and a long garden at the back.

Nancie noticed mechanically how dusty the geraniums looked—how brown and burnt up the lawn, so different from the emerald, velvet-like sward at the Abbey.

Was it caused by the smoke from the town? she wondered.

"Here we are," Munroe said, and he assisted her to alight, and opening the vicarage door, led her through the hall into a large comfortable room, lined with books, which she concluded to be the library. "I will be with you in a minute," he went on, and he left the room and held a long whispered colloquy with someone in the hall. By-and-by a heavy footstep came down the staircase, and she heard Martha's voice talking to Munroe.

"How is he now, Martha?"

Nancie noticed that the cheerful, hopeful tone had quite died out of the doctor's voice, and that it was full now of an intense anxiety. Nancie held her breath to hear the answer.

"Just about as bad as he can be, doctor; he has never been conscious all the afternoon, and he keeps on incessantly calling for Miss Nancie. Do you think she would be afraid to come?"

"She is here, Martha."

Munroe, who had secretly been a little afraid that Martha might regard Nancie's presence in the sick-room as an invasion of her own rights, was much relieved at the question. He went back into the library.

"Now, Miss Nancie, are you sure you will not be frightened? Remember, if you are hysterical, or faint, or do anything in the least idiotic, I shall turn you out of the room at once."

"You need not be afraid. I am not one of the fainting kind." Nancie gave a little contemptuous smile. "Is that Martha?" She went forward, and held out her hand to the old woman. "It is very good of you, Martha, to wish me to come," she said in her sweet, grateful voice; "I won't give you any more trouble than I can help."

"Trouble, Miss Nancie! Nay, I'll not think aught o' that, if only you do him any good," Martha said earnestly. "Let me take your hat and gloves, miss."

Nancie gave a quick glance at herself in

the mirror—a glance which the doctor noticed, and at which he gave a cynical smile.

"I believe if a woman could only know when she was being put in her coffin, she would ask for a looking-glass to arrange her shroud becomingly," he thought.

He felt sorry for his cynicism the next moment, when Nancie spoke.

"Do I look much as usual, doctor? I am afraid lest he should see any change—that I have been fretting," she said; and she took up a rose from the flower-vase on the table, and fastened it in her brooch. "Now I am quite ready."

Martha led the way up the staircase to Lansdell's room. It looked very bare and comfortless, for the carpet and curtains and all unnecessary furniture had been removed, and, though the window was open, the atmosphere was impregnated with the disagreeable odour of carbolic acid. Nancie crossed the room gently, and stood by the bedside, and looked down, with a choking sensation in her throat, and a fast-beating heart, at the dear changed face on the pillow. The eyes were closed, the weary head tossed from side to side, the thin fingers plucked idly at the sheets.

"Nancie, I want you! Why don't you come?" said the feeble voice, and then came a weary sigh and a low moan.

Nancie bent quietly over the bed, and put her cool hand on his forehead.

"Why, my dear, don't you see me? I am here now," she said.

Lansdell started at the sound of the low voice; his eyes opened, he looked at her eagerly, and gave a quiet, contented smile.

"Nancie! I am so glad you have come! What a pretty rose!" he said faintly, and he lifted a feeble hand and touched the rose at her throat.

Dr. Munroe gave a relieved sigh. So far, the experiment seemed likely to be successful, for Lansdell lay quietly back on his pillows, and watched, with a happy peace on his face, as Nancie drew up a chair to the bed, and with a tender hand smoothed back the thick wave of hair that had fallen over his forehead. He evidently did not know anyone but her, for when Munroe went forward and spoke to him cheerfully, he only stared blankly, and did not make any attempt to answer.

"Send them all away, Nancie; I don't want them now you have come," he whispered; and he took her hand and kissed it.

Weary and long, and full of anxiety and suspense, were the days that followed—days when even Munroe's cheerful face and

voice grew subdued and anxious, when Martha's heart quite failed her, and only Nancie dared to hope. She would not despair. Her face grew paler, and her eyes unusually bright and large; but she was always cheerful, always hopeful, never weary or disheartened. She seemed to be embued with almost superhuman strength, Munroe thought; for after a long night of watching, she would leave her seat by the bed, and go to her room and take a couple of hours' rest, and have a bath and make a fresh toilette, and come back, smiling and serene, to resume her place by Lansdell's side. Even in his worst moments her presence seemed to calm him, the sound of her voice or the touch of her hand to exercise a soothing influence, even when the fever was highest. She used to read to him, and though he evidently did not understand a word she said, yet he seemed to like to listen, and would smile and thank her, and entreat her not to weary herself, and be anxious that she should take food and rest, and was always quietly happy when she was with him.

But in spite of this, and of the consciousness that her presence was of more value than Dr. Munroe's medicine, that was a weary time for Nancie. Oh, weary days, when the hot September sun poured in through the windows from morning to night, and the room grew, in spite of the punkah which Munroe had rigged up, and open doors and windows, almost unbearably close and oppressive to both patient and nurse! Oh, wearier nights, almost as hot as the days, when Nancie watched alone through the long hours, and listened sometimes—brave little soul though she was—with an almost superstitious terror to the odd noises which broke the silence in the house. Once she heard the death watch. Its measured tic-tac filled her with an awful dread, at which at any other time she would have been the first to laugh and scoff. Suppose, after all, there did lurk some truth in the old superstition that the monotonous sound, instead of being, as science and her own sense told her, the call of the insect to its mate, was the warning of the change which Munroe had warned her might come at any time! For an instant, as she listened and looked at the white, deathlike face on the pillow, the thought troubled her; the next she laughed at her own folly.

Martha was watching with her that night, and Munroe was asleep in the adjoining room. His experience of the fever

told him that a crisis was approaching, and that perhaps before morning the question of life or death might be solved, and he was anxious to be at hand. So for the last three nights he had slept at the vicarage. Nancie was very grateful to him for the thoughtful kindness which saved her so much responsibility, and lifted, in some measure, the burden of anxiety from her shoulders. Lansdell had neither father nor mother living; his eldest brother, Lord Lansdell, was in India, and his only sister was an invalid, and could not leave her home. Nancie had received a most grateful letter from her in which she thanked her most heartily for her devotion to Lansdell, and expressed the great pleasure with which she looked forward to making—in happier times—the acquaintance of her future sister.

This letter, which Nancie sent for her mother's perusal, and the assurance it conveyed of Lady Fane's warm sympathy and gratitude, mainly sustained her under the scathing disapproval and cutting remarks of Lady Sara.

"I am not in the least surprised, dear Mrs. Monteith," that estimable lady had observed acidly, when she first interviewed Mrs. Monteith on the subject of Nancie's misdemeanour. "No breach of propriety on the part of Miss Nancie could surprise me; but I must say that I am considerably astonished that you and her father should have allowed her to make herself the town talk," and Lady Sara's voice grew still more acid—"literally the town talk!"

"Her father!" Mrs. Monteith sighed, and applied her handkerchief to her eyes. "Dear Lady Sara, he is as bad as herself! He said—you will excuse the vulgarity of the expression—that she was a brick, and a plucky little girl, and that he was proud of his daughter. What could I say after that? And he has been to the vicarage every day—yes, every day—in spite of the danger of infection. Angela there would have gone with him, but I soon put a stop to that."

"I should think so. Why, what would Noel say?" and Lady Sara smiled grimly. Angela coloured hotly.

"Noel would be the last person to bid me keep away, if I could do any good by going," she said haughtily.

"I am not so sure of that. Noel has very strict notions. He would be very much annoyed if people spoke of you as they speak at present of Nancie," Lady Sara said coldly.

"And much Nancie cares how they speak!" Angela said contemptuously.

Indeed, secure of her father's approval, Nancie was perfectly indifferent to any ill-natured remarks which the world might make on her presence at the vicarage. The world! There was no world for Nancie outside the sick room just then. She cared for nothing, and thought of nothing, beyond its boundaries. Angela used, at a certain hour each day, to walk up and down the vicarage garden until Nancie appeared at the window. Then they would exchange a few words—very few; for, though the vicarage was in a very quiet street, there were houses on both sides, and plenty of curious eyes and ears to watch the hurried interviews.

That day Angela had gone home very sadly. For the first time Nancie's resolute cheerfulness had left her, and she had looked so worn and tired, and had spoken so despondently, that Angela's heart ached with loving pity, and she had begged earnestly to be allowed to remain with her. But Nancie would not give permission.

"You would be no use, dear, and mother would be angry," she said in her quiet, decided voice. "There, good-bye! Perhaps I shall have better news to-morrow."

But Nancie's voice quivered as she said the words. Would there be any to-morrow for Lansdell? she wondered.

All through the long hours of that anxious night she sat by the bed and watched the pale, haggard face, with intent, loving eyes that were quick to notice even the smallest change there. Not the twinkling of an eyelid, not a quiver of the lips, passed unseen. Nancie knew that the next few hours—it might be the next few minutes—would bring to her happiness almost beyond description, or a grief almost too great for her strength to endure. She was beginning now to feel the effects of the last fortnight of mental anxiety and hard work, and she was—so she acknowledged to herself for the first time—almost at the end of her endurance.

Well, it was only for a little while, she told herself patiently; just a little longer, and it would be ended one way or another; and till then she could struggle on. So she sat patiently with her little hands clasped

on her lap, watching through the long hours by Lansdell's side. Once, just before the dawn broke, he grew very restless. Then she came nearer and bent over him, and whispered the loving words which rarely failed to soothe him, and kissed him, and pressed her cool face against his fevered cheek. He smiled and murmured something—she could not tell what—and then slept, or seemed to sleep. She dared not move, for fear of waking him, and by-and-by, lulled by the sound of his laboured breathing and the monotonous ticking of the clock, she fell asleep.

She woke with a start and an awful feeling of terror. She had fallen asleep at her post, and she dared scarcely look at Lansdell, lest while she slept the thing she dreaded might have come to pass. How quiet he was! How awfully still the room seemed! Slowly she raised her head from the pillow, and, summoning all her courage, looked at him long and earnestly. Outside the grey dawn was brightening, the mists and shadows of the night had vanished, and in at the window came the first rays of the rising sun.

Nancie looked, hesitated—looked again, and burst into a silent passion of grateful tears. The change had indeed come, but it was not the change she dreaded, and it was a messenger of life, and not the great death-angel, who had passed through the room and stood by the bed while she slept!

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